



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
AT  
CHAPEL HILL

Institute for Environmental Studies  
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June 13, 1975

Chapel Hill, N.C.  
27514

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Kennedy Laboratory for Molecular Medicine  
Stanford University  
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

We are writing on behalf of a university-wide study group of faculty members at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill about something we think concerns us all.

Many highly respected persons have stated that mankind faces a global crisis of unprecedented complexity, seriousness, and urgency; others insist that such views are unwarranted and could be counterproductive to reasonable solution of our problems. We are eager to learn the views of Nobel laureates on this issue. Do the problems of our age -- the threat of nuclear catastrophe, the energy crisis, the population explosion, mass poverty and hunger, ecological problems such as the potential depletion of the ozone layer -- really pose a serious threat to the survival of our civilization? Should we, to a much greater degree than we have done heretofore, channel our intellectual and physical resources to the attempt to ameliorate these problems?

The opinions of Nobel laureates -- individuals recognized as among the most creative minds of the human race -- are of great interest to many throughout the world and will doubtless have a significant influence on their attitudes and actions. Hence it is our intent that the results of this inquiry -- your opinions -- be published and disseminated as widely as possible.

The kinds of problems which prompt us to make this study were voiced by Secretary General Waldheim in an address to the United Nations General Assembly on April 9, 1974. In that speech he emphasized the need

for a more equitable and workable global economic system, a system which takes into account not only the interests and needs of all nations but also the imperative interrelationships of the several parts of the problem -- poverty, population, food, the conservation and just apportionment of natural resources, the preservation of the environment and the problems of trade and monetary systems.

We cannot return to the past. We have no option but to concentrate on the realities of the present and on the prospects for the future. And the problems now confronting national governments and international organizations are so vast and so complex that we have to deal with them in cooperation and as a community of nations. (The New York Times, April 10, 1974, p. 12).

We are requesting that you send us a statement presenting your views concerning one or more of these interconnected global problems (or concerning other global problems

which you feel pose a threat to the survival of civilization).

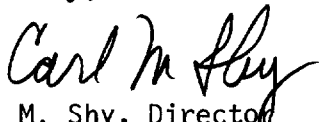
Our plan is this: to publish a book which will include each statement we receive in response to this appeal, provided it is received before October 1, 1975; to include an epilogue pointing out areas of agreement and disagreement in the statements; and assign any royalties from the book to the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF).

We realize that not all Nobel laureates are experts in these problem areas. However you are highly educated and imaginative individuals who try to look farther into the future than most men do. And for that reason we believe that a collection of the individual views of Nobel laureates on these problems could improve public understanding, broaden the scope of discourse, and thereby lead us closer to action. The sooner the process is begun, the greater the probability that mankind can succeed in halting the deterioration of our planet's life-support system and begin to meet at least the minimum needs of all human beings.

We hope you will send us a statement (preferably of a few hundred, and at most a few thousand, words) in the addressed envelope enclosed herewith. If you wish to submit a piece which has already been published, we will undertake to include it in the proposed book, provided we are not prevented from doing so by copyrights.

We are anxious to obtain a balanced cross-section of views and we hope, therefore, that we shall receive responses from as many recipients of this letter as possible -- both those who have strong feelings on the subject (and may have expressed their opinions on past occasions) and those who are not in this category. Whatever your opinions may be, we urge you to respond, and we assure you that your reply will be valued.

Sincerely,



Carl M. Shy, Director  
Institute for Environmental Studies

Winfield Best, Communications Director  
Carolina Population Center

Richard L. Clinton  
Assistant Professor of Political Science

John B. Graham, M.D.  
Alumni Distinguished Professor of Pathology

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